

**CATHOLIC PARISH OF HEALESVILLE, INCORPORATING HEALESVILLE (ST BRIGID'S),  
YARRA GLEN (ST ALOYSIUS) & MARYSVILLE (OUR LADY OF THE SNOWS)**



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**TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (Year A) 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2020**

**LITURGY OF THE WORD**

**First Reading: Isaiah 22:19-23**

A reading from the prophet Isaiah

Thus says the Lord of hosts to Shebna, the master of the palace: I dismiss you from your office, I remove you from your post, and the same day I call on my servant Eliakim son of Hilkiah. I invest him with your robe, gird him with your sash, entrust him with your authority; and he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and to the House of Judah. I place the key of the House of David on his shoulder; should he open, no one shall close, should he close, no one shall open. I drive him like a peg into a firm place; he will become a throne of glory for his father's house.

The word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

**Responsorial Psalm: Ps 137:1-3, 6, 8**

**R. Lord, your love is eternal; do not forsake the work of your hands.**

I thank you, Lord, with all my heart,  
you have heard the words of my mouth.  
Before the angels I will bless you,  
I will adore before your holy temple.

**R. Lord, your love is eternal; do not forsake the work of your hands.**

I thank you for your faithfulness and love  
which excel all we ever knew of you.  
On the day I called, you answered;  
you increased the strength of my soul.

**R. Lord, your love is eternal; do not forsake the work of your hands.**

The Lord is high yet he looks on the lowly  
and the haughty he knows from afar.

Your love, O Lord, is eternal,  
discard not the work of your hands.

**R. Lord, your love is eternal; do not forsake the work of your hands.**

**Second Reading: Romans 11:33-36**

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans

How rich are the depths of God - how deep his wisdom and knowledge - and how impossible to penetrate his motives or understand his methods! Who could ever know the mind of the Lord? Who could ever be his counsellor? Who could ever give him anything or lend him anything? All that exists comes from him; all is by him and for him. To him be glory for ever! Amen.

The word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

**Gospel Acclamation:** Matthew 16:18

Alleluia, alleluia!

You are Peter, the rock on which I will build my Church; the gates of hell will not hold out against it.

Alleluia!

**Gospel:** Matthew 16:13-20

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi he put this question to his disciples, 'Who do people say the Son of Man is?' And they said, 'Some say he is John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.' 'But you,' he said, 'who do you say I am?' Then Simon Peter spoke up, 'You are the Christ,' he said, 'the Son of the living God.' Jesus replied, 'Simon son of Jonah, you are a happy man! Because it was not flesh and blood that revealed this to you but my Father in heaven. So I now say to you: You are Peter and on this rock I will build my Church. And the gates of the underworld can never hold out against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth shall be considered bound in heaven; whatever you loose on earth shall be considered loosed in heaven.' Then he gave the disciples strict orders not to tell anyone that he was the Christ.

The Gospel of the Lord. Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

**[FROM FR FRANCIS DENTON](#)**

**What is Prayer?**

**Part 1: "Building a relationship with God"**

In the parish bulletin over the last month I cobbled together a four-week series entitled: "What is the Mass?" It certainly wasn't an exhaustive treatment of the subject but sought to

distil what the Mass is in its essence. The Second Vatican Council boldly proclaimed that the Church's Eucharistic liturgy is the "source" and "summit" of the Christian life and "a sacred action surpassing all others." (SC n.7). Yet, the council also recognised the necessity of personal prayer: "The spiritual life, however, is not limited solely to participation in the liturgy. The Christian is indeed called to pray with his brethren, but he must also enter into his chamber to pray to the Father, in secret; yet more, according to the teaching of the Apostle, he should pray without ceasing" (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n.12).

Beginning this week, I wanted to embark on a four-week examination of prayer. This will be not so much a step by step 'how to' guide to prayer, but an examination of what prayer is, in its very essence. As with the Mass, it is only when we understand what it is we are doing that we can begin to appreciate its importance. While we all have an intuition of what prayer is, practically speaking many people feel very lost when it comes to prayer. Some aren't sure if they are 'doing it right'. Many experience prayer as a constant battle with distractions. Or perhaps prayer might seem like a one-way telephone call where we do all the talking and are left wondering if there is anyone on the other end! For others it's as though the 'prayer well' has run dry – they go to prayer but feel like they're not getting anything out of it. If you find prayer hard work or a fairly dry, routine experience then hopefully this series on prayer will convince you to persevere in prayer, and perhaps encourage you to "put out into the deep" (Luke 5:4) exploring new, undiscovered depths.

In the past many children grew up with the cautionary exhortation: "Be sure to say your prayers!" Prayers were typically memorised and recited as a daily chore, perhaps with the aim of keeping God happy. Sometimes we weren't always sure what we were saying, like the child who after many years finally asked why we in the Hail Mary we pray "Blessed art thou, a monk swimming"! To teach children the commendable discipline and routine of daily prayer is no small achievement and my intention is in no way to denigrate the recitation of memorised prayers from the treasury of the Catholic tradition. Jesus himself taught his disciples the Our Father as the pattern of all prayer, and we've prayed those words ever since. Even so, many children who grew up reciting prayers never graduated to the next level of understanding the meaning and end to which these prayers are directed, namely, building a real, living relationship with God. Moreover, a healthy relationship with God enables us to form healthy and rightly-ordered relationships with our neighbours. For Catholics, when it comes to love of God and neighbour it is never a case of 'either/or': it is always 'both/and' since they are inseparably linked.

Man's existential longing for communion is recounted in the second creation account of Genesis: "The Lord God said, "It is not right that the man should be alone. I shall make him a helper" (Gen 2:18). In this account Adam is in the garden of Eden with an abundance of fruit and everything that he could possibly need. Yet his material needs do not suffice; he requires something more at the level of the soul. We are created for love and will always experience the incompleteness of our 'original solitude' as Pope John Paul II called it. Romantic love is one prominent and powerful expression of this built-in longing for communion, but it is certainly not the only one. The love between parents and children, grandparents and grandchildren, siblings, friends, colleagues, and so on, are in no way inferior expressions of love simply because they are not romantic. These relationships are so important to human flourishing, that without them our growth psychologically and developmentally would be stunted. As important as these human relationships are, there is an even higher love for which we were created. In the hierarchy of relationships, the love of God has first place (Mt 22:37-

39). If our relationship with God is theoretically the most important relationship in our life is this reflected in the time and effort we invest in our prayer life?

What does the prayer life of the average Catholic in the year 2020 look like? That would be a fascinating subject for a survey. In the absence of such data I could merely hazard a guess based upon my general observations. Many, perhaps most, Catholics today do not have a structured prayer life to speak of. Prayer, if it happens at all, is a matter of spontaneous thoughts: “God, help me find a car space!”, “God, what am I doing with my life?”, “please, help him kick a goal: thank you God!”, and the like. Those Catholics who set aside designated periods in the day for prayer constitute a tiny minority. Even for many devoutly practising Catholics prayer is something we try to do with maximum efficiency. To put it bluntly, we want to get it over and done with as quickly as possible, so we can get back to doing our own ‘very important’ business, like watching TV.

If, upon careful examination, our attitude to prayer is that of throwing God the scraps of time we can spare Him, then we might require an ‘attitude adjustment’! It is no mere pious hyperbole to say that for us Christians prayer ought to be *the* most important activity in our day. No one is so busy that they don’t have time to eat (or at least we won’t survive for long on a meal-free schedule). Similarly, no Christian should be so busy that they have no time for prayer. Our chances of spiritual survival are equally as bleak as the person who is too busy to eat. Why is prayer so essential? Because prayer is the basis of our forming a real relationship with God. Could we expect a marriage to last where the spouses only exchanged a few words per week on a ‘needs’ basis (“Honey, can you remember to get the milk?!”). It would be a dysfunctional relationship to say the least. Every relationship we have demands a dialogical exchange. The more we love someone, the more frequently we will want to speak to him/her. Time spent with those we love, never feels like time wasted. Conversely, if there is no interpersonal exchange then there is no relationship to speak of, like two people sitting on a train opposite each other with their headphones on. This is equally true of God. It is not enough to know God exists; to have a *relationship* with God we have to enter into a dialogue with him through prayer. The Catechism of the Catholic Church puts it thus:

*In the New Covenant, prayer is the living relationship of the children of God with their Father who is good beyond measure, with his Son Jesus Christ and with the Holy Spirit. The grace of the Kingdom is "the union of the entire holy and royal Trinity . . . with the whole human spirit." Thus, the life of prayer is the habit of being in the presence of the thrice-holy God and in communion with him. This communion of life is always possible because, through Baptism, we have already been united with Christ. (CCC n.2565)*

The centrality of prayer in the Christian life reminds us that our faith is not merely a philosophy of personal fulfilment, a moral code, or a philanthropic agency. Our faith is fundamentally relational, because God *knows and loves* us and we can come to know and love God through the intimate communion of prayer.

### **WEEKLY MASSES ARE AVAILABLE ON OUR ST BRIGID’S YOU TUBE CHANNEL**

A reminder that Fr Francis’ Sunday Masses are recorded each weekend and are available on St Brigid’s You Tube Channel each Sunday morning. Fr Francis records Masses from St Brigid’s, St Patrick’s and St Aloysius churches. The link is accessible through St Brigid’s Healesville’s website, or by searching St Brigid’s Healesville on You Tube, or using the link: <https://bit.ly/StBsHville>

## KEEPING US CONNECTED

We are considering further ways for our parish to stay connected:

**The Parish Grapevine** Our previous Parish Grapevine is out of date and will no longer be used. The Parish Grapevine advises of deaths and funerals, and notifies parishioners of news instantly, but privacy is maintained as addressees do not see the email addresses of others in the group. Please email the office if you would like to participate in the new Parish Grapevine. Previous participants need to email to be added to the new list.

**Weekly Bible Study/Reflection Group** If you are interested in joining a faith discussion group via video chat on a phone, ipad or computer, please email the office.

**Morning tea catch up** A suggestion has been made that we might have a 'zoom' morning tea next Sunday morning, 30<sup>th</sup> August. If this virtual get together proves popular, we may go on to meet more often, temporarily replacing our weekly chats following Mass, which we miss so much. If you would like to be included in the initial zoom meeting, to be held at **10 am on Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> August**, please email the office on [healesville@cam.org.au](mailto:healesville@cam.org.au)

## SOME THOUGHTS FROM DEBBIE

I have occasionally written of some of the fascinating conversations about our faith that I have enjoyed with our school children over the years. Often these conversations have caused me to think through my understanding of God's presence from a new and oblique perspective. As they say, kids say the darndest things, things that are often well worth exploring! A conversation I had a couple of years ago with a young student jumps to mind.

She was concerned to be reassured that because Jesus lived and died, and then rose from the dead, that Jesus is not now a zombie. My little friend trusted me enough to tell me about her quiet fear. This was a genuine question, she was not joking. When I was growing up, many topics that our young children discuss freely today were concepts that I was not even familiar with until I was very much older. Cartoons were a little violent, and absurd, the Road Runner and Wile E Coyote battled it out with dynamite and giant springs, but there was never a hint of blood, just smoking fur and a stunned look. It is a far different world today. Zombies are fictitious characters in the horror genre, and this example illustrates how vulnerable our youngsters are, with more exposure than ever to what is not real. It is no wonder that their young minds struggle to separate fantasy from spirituality when the two concepts collide. Four year olds may believe in fairies and superheroes, but as they grow, children come to work out what is fantasy and what is reality with adult guidance. I tried to explain to my little friend that God is real, not fantasy, and that, because God is love, our belief in him should never bring fear.

She is not alone in her fear of God. It saddens me when I hear of adults who are terrified of him, feeling that they cannot live up to his 'sky-high standards'. Sadly, I have heard it said that there are two ways to get to heaven, you can strive to get there by 'being good', or you can 'have the hell scared out of you'. How sad it is that God should be considered the stuff of nightmares, rather than the hero of our dreams? To live in fear of him is to underestimate his power to lead us safely home. When we limit God in our doubt, we limit our potential to live in communion with him. Our friendship with God is offered to us generously, even lavishly, in order to sustain and comfort us as we journey through life. We simply need to reach out for him, to try our best with a sincere heart, and to trust that he will do the rest.

We are living beings, with physical, mental and spiritual needs, and have the right to be nurtured in all aspects of our being to be whole. No matter how old we may be, we never outgrow our need to know that God is with us, and that he uses our world to communicate his love for us. We need to help our little ones to sort out fantasy from reality, and, more importantly, we need to lead them to believe in what they cannot see, truth beyond our senses, and to open their eyes to the limitless love that God has for them. Jesus is our pathway to full life with God forever, eternal joy and peace. Our families are a loving introduction for us to the security and peace of God's presence, truly with us now. What a great gift it is to know and love God and to trust in him.

### [GUARDIAN ANGELS OF KENYA](#)

Please remember Fr Jason and his community in your prayers. Covid has hit them hard and daily life continues to bring great pastoral and financial challenges.

### [TIME FOR A GIGGLE!](#)

#### **Examples of how *not* to word notices in a Church bulletin:**

- The Fasting and Prayer Conference includes meals.
- The sermon for this morning is entitled 'Jesus walks on the water'. The sermon for this evening will be 'The search for Jesus'
- Don't let worry kill you off. Let the Church help!

### [PLEASE PRAY:](#)

For all of our parishioners, and their families and friends, and for their special intentions, and for all who need our prayers

### [FOR THOSE WHO HAVE DIED RECENTLY](#)

Albert Slawinski, Maureen Fogarty, Bob Barclay

### [FOR THOSE WHO ARE SICK](#)

Babies Emmett, Noah Glen Christie, Tedi and Santi; Roman, Blake Smith, Trish Leahy, John Snell, Abby Sharp, Peter Munro, Megan, Bernie Jansen, Andrew Sharp, John, Glenn, Lyn Francis, Dorothy Barber, Fiona, Annie Preuss, Michelle Ryan, Damian, John, Alison, Heather, Julie Bates, Garry Dettman, Bradley Jordan, Jeanette Henkel, Richard Galbraith, Debbie Huby, Geoff Lucas, Sandra Donkin, Dorothy Fraser, Glen, Fred Bullas, Fred Coullas, Evie Gleeson, Indy Dawes, Rade Krstic, Megan Williams, Michael Wood, Bill Howie, Jennie, Michael, Margo & Stephen Youngberry, Marie Hammond, John Mulholland, Rhiannon Days, Val Savitt, Ron Garland, Jaz Nueber, James Cooney, Robert, Mary & Gerard Bariola, Tilly Van der Zee, Lydia, Joyce Slattery, Lawrie Field, Annie, Bob Ireland, Val & Michael Christie, Ted & Peter Bowling, Natasha, Mia, James, Richard Adams, Mitchell & Wynn Wilson, Carina Warton, Anne Bateman.

### [FOR THOSE WHOSE ANNIVERSARIES ARE IN AUGUST](#)

Ann Maris (03.07.07), Julie Ann Ward (03.07.86), Nick Pitt (John McDonald (03.08.93), Patricia Newell (06.08.07), John Youngberry(07.08.79), Barbara Pollard (11.08.09), Andrew Sotko (14.08.07), Fr Loughnan(15.08.02), Bernadette Hanley (18.08.09), Mary Thomas (19.08.07), Douglas Ireland (21.08.79), Zandor Hunka (22.08.06), Alison Snell (25.08.02) Maria Slawinski (25.08.82), Gerald Slattery, Derek Beeby, Tilly Blackburn, Thea Humphries, Maggie Lloyd-Smith, Margaret Pomeroy (23.08.19), Rosemary Fries (10.08)